

Training to Make Order Out of Chaos Rocklin's Emergency Preparedness is a City Priority

Author: Rocklin Fire Chief Bill Mikesell

When a disaster or emergency of any kind strikes, public safety officials must be ready to act quickly and decisively. Preparation is crucial, because the speed and effectiveness of the response often is the difference between life and death.

The Rocklin Police and Fire Departments take this responsibility seriously. We have longstanding strategic plans in place designed to ensure the appropriate response for natural disasters including earthquakes and floods as well as chemical spills and other incidents.

Since 9/11, the necessity for emergency planning has intensified and added new dimensions to preparedness efforts. In our world today, terrorism and bio terrorism are real possibilities and we must do everything possible to protect our community against from all kinds of potential disasters. – including chemical and biological releases.

Last week, Rocklin participated in a “Full Scale Exercise” for emergency training and planning. As part of the U.S. Office of Domestic Preparedness (Homeland Security Department) a grant of \$180,000 was secured for Placer County. This grant allowed all the regional agencies including Rocklin to plan, train and participate in real-life disaster simulations designed to fine tune our existing emergency plan.

Crucial to this targeted planning is the concept of “mutual aid.” In the event of a disaster, resources outside of the City of Rocklin may be needed to respond to the incident. Through ongoing drills and simulations, neighboring jurisdictions have the opportunity to perfect the communications process to achieve total coordination in response to any situation.

No detail in this process is too small. Emergency kits have every item needed down to the paperclips and dry erase markers used by officials at the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) where public safety workers, city staff and other officials assess resource demands and coordinate with workers in the field. Additionally, lines of communication are the lifeline for any coordinated response. We secure the most effective technology possible including digital and analog cellular and facility phones, because the lines of communication can never be broken when it counts most.

The key to all of this emergency planning is leadership. Even though the Rocklin Fire and Police Departments deal with crisis situations everyday, we want you to be confident that everything is being done to keep our homes and families safe. From dramatic situations such as the Sierra Fire a few years ago or preparing for terrorism incidents that we hope will never happen, to everyday responses to public safety calls; we work to be prepared so you can be safe.

Our goal, first and foremost is to protect those we serve. We train everyday to bring order out of chaos and to keep Rocklin safe!

For more information regarding adult education programs on public safety as well as volunteer programs for the Rocklin Fire and Police Departments please call 916.625.5300. Or, visit our website at www.rocklin.ca.gov